

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This Chapter explains the introduction to the study. The nature of the study including background of the study, statement of the problems, aims of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, and clarification of the terms will be elaborated. In the end of this Chapter, the organization of the paper is displayed as general guidelines of the research paper.

### **1.1. Background of the Study**

Writing plays an important role for students who are in the process of learning a language (Ren, et al, 2009). In language learning, writing is one of the important skills because it is the most effective way to show someone's proficiency (Ren, et al, 2009). Furthermore, confirming to English curriculum declared by Indonesian government, writing is a fundamental skill that the students should master in learning English (Depdiknas, 2006). As the consequence, in 2004 Indonesia adopted a genre-based curriculum for teaching English in Indonesian schools (Emilia, Hermawan, and Tati, 2010). However, it is not only cover writing skill, but also other English basic skills such as; listening, speaking, and reading.

Unfortunately, among the four skills, writing is considered as the most difficult skills (Westwood, 2008). Writing involves higher level of mental processes in human intelligence than reading or other language skills (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Hyland, 2003). In accordance, Alwasilah (2011) states that writing is the most neglected skill in Indonesian schools. He explains "writing is not only less practiced, but also taught unprofessionally.... Writing is the most exalted language skill, yet it has been the most neglected one in our education" (Alwasilah, 2001 cited in Emilia, 2005, p. 12).

In addition, Levine (1993) states that the difficulty of writing occur because both of English as Second Language (ESL) and English for Foreign Language (EFL) students who consider writing is difficult do not know what and how to write, feel lack of vocabulary, fear of criticism, and want to avoid emotional confusion when they are facing a topic or a blank paper. This problem becomes a basic reason of why the students only accept minimum supports to write a good text. The students mostly deal with theories but less practice on how

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(A Case Study)*

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to use the skill. Yet, Indonesian students face a lot of text genre to be learned such as: Recount, Narrative, Procedure, Exposition, Descriptive, and Report (National Curriculum, 2004). Moreover, the text type in the current research is Descriptive.

Descriptive text is a text which describes actual, places, events or objects (Alwasilah, 2005, p.14). Descriptive text is important to be learned because it can help the students in describing information vividly and accurately (Emilia and Christie, 2013, p.1). Based on the observation during teaching practicum, most students think that Descriptive text is difficult. Hence, the current research attempts to investigate how the students produce Descriptive text by analyzing their text.

Analyzing students' text is very important to do because it can help English teacher to find out the students' ability and difficulty in writing (Lock, 1996). In accordance, Emilia (2005) states that research about analyzing students' texts are very important because by knowing the students' difficulties, it helps the teacher to solve the students' problems. Hence, it is considered important to conduct a research intended to analyze students' written products in order to see their ability and difficulty of writing a text.

Therefore, based on the preceding elaboration of those theories, the current research aims to find out the students' ability in writing Descriptive texts by analyzing the students' texts in terms of the schematic structure and linguistic features using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), particularly Transitivity system.

In addition, there are a lot of studies in text analysis using SFL framework, such as study which was conducted by Christie (2005), Feez & Joyce (2000), Emilia (2005) and Emilia *et al.* (2008). They investigated the primary and secondary students' writing organization of schematic structure, purpose and grammatical elements using three Metafunctions in SFL respectively; Experiential, Ideational and Interpersonal metafunction. Meanwhile, in the current research, the analysis will focus only on the Experiential metafunction which is Transitivity system in order to discover students' ability in writing a text.

The results of this research paper are expected to provide valuable information on how the students' ability in writing Descriptive text, so the teacher can choose the appropriate teaching method and material to help develop students' Descriptive text.

## **1.2. Statement of problems**

In order to find out students' ability in writing Descriptive text, it is asked the following research questions:

1. How is the students' ability in writing Descriptive Texts in terms of the schematic structure and linguistic features?
2. What difficulties are faced by the students in writing Descriptive texts?

## **1.3. Aims of the study**

Related to the statement of the problems, the current research aimed at investigating:

1. The ways in which the students produce Descriptive text in terms of the schematic structure and linguistic features.
2. Students' difficulties in writing Descriptive text.

## **1.4. Scope of the study**

There is a scope or limitation of the research. The limitation of the research focuses only on discovering the students' ability in writing Descriptive text by analyzing the students' texts using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL).

Descriptive text has been chosen because of several reasons. First, Descriptive text is a representation of factual genre text and fundamental to be used in many areas of life (Emilia & Christie, 2013, p.1). Second, learning Descriptive text is important in providing students the basic knowledge of communication in English (ibid).

Furthermore, the students' ability can be seen through the schematic structure and linguistic features of the text by using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as proposed by Halliday (1994), Gerot & Wignell (1994), and Emilia (2010). Hence, in the current research, the texts are analyzed in terms of the schematic structure and linguistic features of the text which is Descriptive text.

### **1.5. Significance of the study**

The research is significant from three perspectives. Theoretically, the research is expected to make a greater contribution to the English field, especially in writing skill. It is expected to enrich the literature about the application of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) in analyzing students' texts, and the current research can be used as a reference.

Practically, the research is expected to give the information to the teachers about how to identify students' ability in writing Descriptive Text. Professionally, the research is conducted to help the teachers to predict and describe patterns by giving an explicit teaching about the schematic structure and linguistic features of the text especially Descriptive text.

### **1.6. Clarification of terms**

#### **- Writing**

Writing is defined as a process of delivering ideas by taking notes (Harmer, 2004: 11). In other words, writing is a process used to express idea without saying or face to face interaction and others can understand the meaning by reading it (Elbow, 2000).

#### **- Descriptive Text**

Descriptive text is a text type which purposes to describe, show and provide information of particular person, thing, place or event based on what is seen, heard, felt, tasted and smelled (Derewianka, 1990; Gerot & Wignell, 1995; Knapp & Watkins, 2005; Nafisah & Kurniawan, 2007).

#### **- Systemic Functional Linguistics**

Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) is a theory in linguistics which sees language as not only a set of rules, but also serves as a resource for making meaning system (Halliday, 1994 p.15; Lock, 1996 p.2; Emilia, 2005 p.87; Eggins, 2004 p.2).

### **1.7. Organization of the paper**

This paper will be presented into five chapters. Each chapter is divided into subtopics that elaborate the investigated issue.

**Chapter 1 Introduction:** This chapter presents background of the study, statement of the problems, aims of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study and in the end of this chapter, the researcher informs the organization of paper.

**Chapter II Literature Review:** This chapter provides theoretical foundation of the research, which discusses some theories that are related to writing including the definition of writing, the importance and the criteria of writing. Since Descriptive text is used as the main text to be analyzed, this chapter also discusses a theory of Descriptive text. The last, this chapter also explains a theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics including Transitivity system as a tool for analyzing students' texts.

**Chapter III Research Methodology:** This chapter elaborates the methodology of the research, which includes research questions, research design, site and participant, data collection and data analysis.

**Chapter IV – Findings and Discussions:** This chapter displays the result of the research, which includes findings and discussions of the current research regarding the students' ability in writing Descriptive Text and also some difficulties which were faced by the students during their writing process.

**Chapter V – Conclusions and Suggestions:** This chapter presents conclusions of the findings and the suggestions for those who are learning English including English teacher and further study in writing areas.